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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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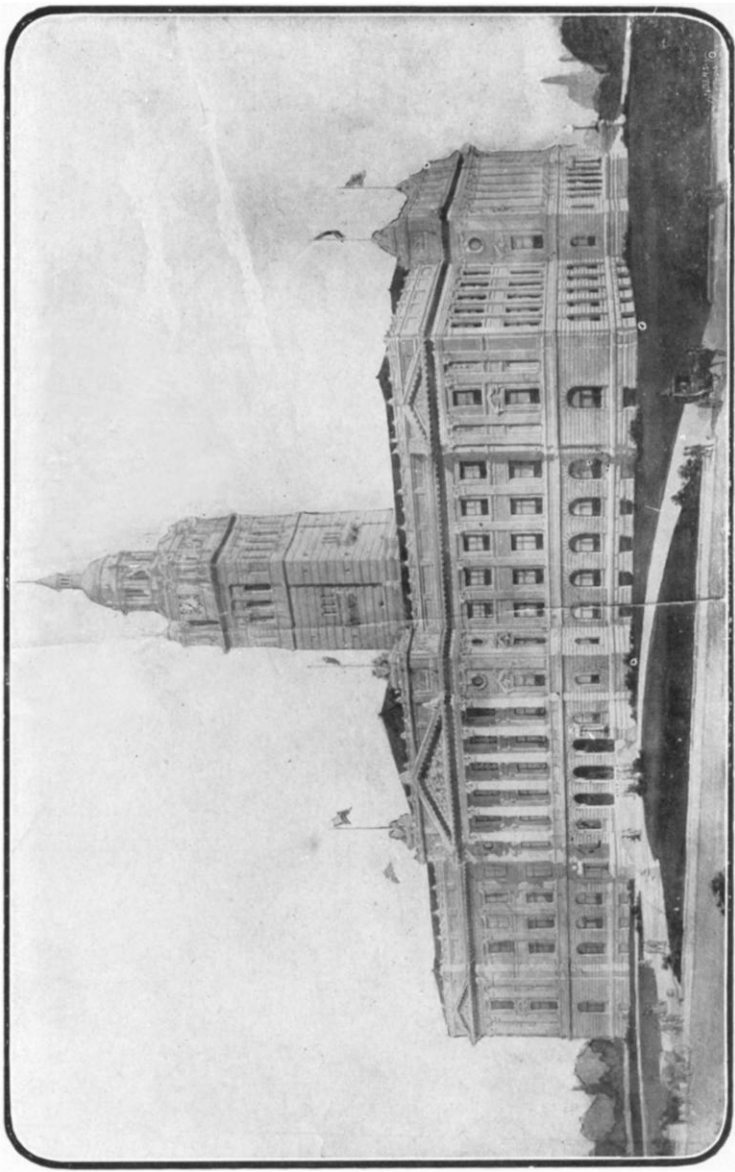
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WHOLE  
NUMBER 105

## REGULATION OF ATHLETICS—WHAT NEXT?

ABOUT 1890 the intercollegiate football leaven, which had at that time worked pretty thoroughly through the eastern institutions, began noticeably to affect those of the middle West. Suddenly college rivalry became intensely active. In the fall of the year institutions in their entirety—president, faculty, and all—followed their teams from point to point and shouted themselves hoarse in cheering their champions on to victory. Elation amounting to frenzy went with success, and the depths of despondency followed defeat. The eastern coach quickly made his appearance. With his first advent tricks and questionable practices already tabooed in the East were common in western contests. Coaches directed their teams on the field. Brawn was the surest way to college preferment. Saloon men raised large sums to keep favorites in college; the very woods were searched for huge men of immense physical vigor. Brain did not count; to enter college, intellectual attainment was no longer necessary. Teams were becoming a permanent and paid body of men, and the whole thing was rapidly assuming a gladiatorial aspect. Boys quite differently taught at home were rapidly developing an oft-indulged habit of betting their sesterces on the heads of their favorites. With the cries, "Put him out," "Kill him," from the side lines one might expect to see thumbs reversed. College faculties, charged as they are with immense responsibility, were the first to return to sanity. Drastic action



THE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL, OMAHA, NEBRASKA, AS IT WILL LOOK WHEN COMPLETED.

on their part stopped the drift toward the grosser forms of professionalism. Those experiences in the early nineties were sufficient to settle the question of strict amateurism for college sports. There are few students of the conditions then existing who are unwilling to stand firmly on the platform: *Amateurism* or *nothing*.

Rightly and of necessity, as I believe, those college faculties which are alive to athletic problems everywhere take as their basis of action in this direction: "College athletics must be amateur."

With that fundamental thought the regulations have been of two kinds: (1) necessary, (2) expedient. The necessary regulations legislate against "ringers" or non-students, against direct or indirect pay for athletic services, against the coach, the trainer, or other professional on the field, against playing under an assumed name. The expedient regulations discourage migration for athletic reasons; strive to secure a genuine student representation; strive to put in force such machinery as will make the whole code effective; limit college or university time to four years; put games, grounds, and student officials under faculty control; strive to prevent college attendance simply for athletic reasons. In brief, expedient regulations are designed to make rules against professionalism effective and to place athletics in colleges secondary to intellectual training.

Anyone who will take the pains to read carefully a pamphlet edited for private circulation by Professor Jones, of Minnesota, and containing the proceedings of the Intercollegiate Conference Faculty Representatives since January 11, 1895, will be deeply impressed with the genuineness of the endeavor of the faculties of our leading institutions here in the middle West to make intercollegiate athletics clean, helpful, and ideal. Athletics are not the purpose of college life. They are its incident. Rightly cultivated they help to secure strong bodies for strong minds. They furnish the occasion for self-conquest, high endeavor, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and the cultivation and practice of a keen sense of honor. These are the many virtues of the forceful and helpful life—the life of the saving remnant; and for such

fruits as these of our athletic system our faculties are longing and striving. Are these the fruits of eight years of endeavor—three of law-making and five of law interpretation and careful regulation? Do the last five years leave us hopeful for the future? Do they point to the final and complete ascendancy of higher things, or what is their lesson?

Without attempting at this moment to answer this query directly, may I be allowed to state some of the alleged facts with which I have come in contact, and from the consideration of which, if in any degree true, existing conditions and tendencies may be inferred? I have no desire to rant and denounce, no desire to classify institutions by calling some sheep and others goats. Specific things may have a local habitation, but that element I would have you forget, and have you consider only the general truths that lie behind them and cause them to be. Tendencies is our inquiry—tendencies after five years under well-known and definite rules, their causes, and, where wrong, their cure.

What, then, after these years of effort and enlightenment, are some of the things known or generally believed to be taking place?

Is it true, as was alleged in the papers, that a manager took money from students, and sought further contributions from business men, and actually paid the funds secured to a player to hold him in college for the team?

Is it true that men influence irresponsible college officials to testify to what is false, and thus add another year to their college athletic time?

Is it true that athletic managers engage in an unseemly struggle for prospective students of athletic promise, and use emissaries and questionable propositions to secure them?

Do they ransack the country from Maine to California in search of material?

Are athletes *induced* by the promise of fake business positions, the principal duties of which are drawing of a salary sufficiently large to pay college expenses?

Did the young collegian speak the truth when he said that five of the first eleven in his institution were hired?

Did another student speak the truth when in a burst of confidence he exclaimed: "We pay our men just as the rest of you do, but you can't find it out"?

What about the high-salaried outside coaches? Do they stand between the athletic management and the man who seeks pay for athletic services? Do they strive to build up winning teams by devoting part of their large salaries to the purchase of men? Do they allow men on their teams who they know have made a practice of playing for money? Do they ever use such billingsgate and the language of the brothel in dealing with their men that they burn out from them forever all decency and self-respect, that they blast their moral characters as with the serpent's breath? Do they ever encourage the men under them to break training with a grand drunken debauch? Who are these professional coaches anyway? Are they usually the full-fledged product and brightest examples of our great eastern institutions? Or are they irresponsible men hired for three months at salaries which make college presidents envious? One says publicly and aggressively to college instructors: "You must give me full control over the time of the team. If its members do not come up to the standard of their work, you must not flunk them." Is he the kind of man to whom we should intrust our students, those hostages committed to our care, at the most impressionable period of their lives? We should certainly think twice before answering that question in the affirmative.

While we are emphatically asserting our allegiance to amateur ideals, is it nevertheless believed that we are tending in fact toward professionalism? How otherwise can we explain the two following incidents?

In a reputable institution in the middle West, with an honorable history, an endeavor has just been made to combine students, faculty, and trustees to hire a baseball pitcher for the college team.

In another similar institution it is seriously proposed to give athletes their board and room for services, and do such other things as are necessary to attract men who are known or believed to be going to the highest bidder.

Is there any explanation of these athletic sins except one?

These institutions are proposing to do openly and deliberately what they believe others are doing under cover.

My remarks do not apply to the middle West alone. Those conversant with athletic affairs in this region know of cases of corrupt inducement emanating in some way from some of the great eastern institutions, and believe such cases common.

A professor of national reputation in a great seaboard university recently complained publicly of existing conditions. An undergraduate was allowed to handle \$50,000 in a single season, with all that means in the way of temptation to misuse. This same young man alleged his *athletic* activity as a reason why he should be passed in applied mechanics. It is needless to say that the substitute course was not accepted.

Less than 17 per cent. of the colleges of the United States expend \$50,000 upon their entire annual budget, yet there is one man, an undergraduate, handling that amount while engaged in the serious and exacting life of a student! No wonder the professor exclaimed: "It is an outrage!"

Another eminent professor, representing another of the great eastern institutions, said: "Athletics is a good thing, but the university sports are not athletics, they are professionalism and nothing else. I do not mean that the men are professionals in the sense that their rules say they are professional. But when you keep men for months and months on a special system of training, and then charge so much to see them perform, it is professionalism pure and simple."

Leaving discussion of the secondary situation to my colleagues let us return to our question: Are college athletic law-givers succeeding in raising sport to a higher level? Are these results manifest? Are our students stimulated to greater achievement in honesty, self-conquest, loyalty, self-sacrifice? Are their perception and practice of fine manly honor being refined and intensified?

I fear that the opposite is too largely true. I fear that our students are coming more and more to the opinion that all is fair in athletics and war, that rules are for the other fellow, that

anything is justifiable which is not found out, and that there is no great disgrace attaching to things found out. Such a state of mind, if it exists and is increasing, will certainly in time choke out moral, religious, and spiritual life from our men. It threatens the very foundations of all instruction, and ultimately of educational institutions themselves, of society and government. Unless my observation is entirely at fault, there is danger, and it is increasing; and I doubt not you have all seen evidence that good men as well as bad among our students wink at the evasion of established rules and sit silent in the presence even of downright chicanery. You may not agree with me in this gloomy view, but though I am by nature an optimist, I will proceed upon the assumption that danger is impending and increasing.

Are we at the end of our resources, or are further remedies available? Our college faculties must be passive or active. They must retire entirely from the field, and leave the students in absolute and undisputed control—a course contrary to the traditions of American institutions of learning and one already abandoned as harmful in the extreme—or they must adopt one of three courses of action: (1) suppression, (2) revolution, (3) further reformation.

*Suppression* means retreat and confessed failure. To my mind it is justifiable only as a final and necessary measure to root out a disorder that does not respond to milder treatment and has become intolerable and malignant. We are yet, I believe, far from that stage.

*Revolution* means a radical departure from the usual methods in vogue among schools of all kinds for sustaining athletics. Such revolutionary systems are beginning to appear in the annual contests between the army and navy, when the spectators are all guests of the competing institutions. They are seen to some extent at Culver Military Academy, but are most clearly set forth in the plans recently adopted at Washington University. I trust that Dean C. M. Woodard of that institution will explain this system to us.

But I am not yet ready to say that our legislators have exhausted all possibilities along lines now almost universally



followed. I am prepared to advocate further reforms, and believe that many reasonable and untried possibilities in regulation are still open to us here in the middle West.

There should be a program agreed upon which might require several years to complete, but which would point the way for further effort. The Conference colleges are an example of a group of colleges that are organized to work together; the Ohio Conference is another; and so other groups can easily be found. For every such group I would suggest a program somewhat as follows:

1. Absolute business publicity.
2. A worthy and permanent record of athletic achievement.
3. One year's residence and reasonable success in studies before a student can become a candidate for an intercollegiate or interscholastic team.
4. Repudiation of all recruiting agents or agencies.
5. Graduate and amateur coaching without pay.
6. A reasonable amount of disarmament.
7. A lower limit than now prevails for a maximum admission fee to witness intercollegiate sports. Dethrone the almighty dollar and return to simplicity.

8. One other source of reform has been recently heralded from the University of Iowa; namely, a new, compactly formed, well-guarded intercollegiate athletic society among students who have attained distinction in athletic events, and whose purpose, energetically carried out, shall be to insist upon an amateurism above suspicion and ideals of manhood, honor, and courtesy that will at once and forever eliminate every objectionable feature from our college sports.

By absolute publicity I mean something adequate and permanent; some such cure, in fact, as is proposed for the trust evils of the country. While faculty members may be honest, conscientious, and fearless, they may still be careless. Something is needed to spur them to the utmost vigilance in the discharge of a great duty.

If this should make the labors of athletic committees seem too burdensome to some now in control, they should retire and make

way for successors who would be willing to accept the responsibilities of their office, as well as its honors. In my opinion the athletic committee is today the most important by far in our colleges. It deals directly with the morals of the student, his rightness or his wrongness under stress in his relation to others. Other committees may prescribe the conditions under which an institution shall bestow its honors for intellectual achievement, but the athletic committee deals directly with the habits of thought and action which make the student a good or bad citizen. There is no body of men connected with our colleges and universities whose doings deeply interest a larger class of people than the faculty and student officers of athletic associations. There are none who owe to the public a more accurate and explicit accounting and record. Elsewhere I have advocated the publication by groups of institutions of an athletic annual. This is a book-making age, yet happy is the man who writes for a large and assured constituency; and such would doubtless be the case with the editors of a well-constructed and reasonably complete annual. Besides giving the public inside facts, it would tend to emphasize to athletes their correct and reasonable rewards for excellence. In the proportion that the glory of achievement fills the imagination of the ambitious athlete, in that same proportion will money cease to influence his thoughts. The promising young athlete will not be writing to the various directors of athletics and others similarly placed: "If I favor your institution with my presence, what will you do for me in the way of board, room, soft jobs, and other special personal emoluments and privileges?" But he will ask himself: "Where, while securing the intellectual training I desire, can I as a secondary purpose probably achieve for myself the greatest permanent athletic good and distinction?" At the same time he will have powerful influence added to those already existing to keep his record clean.

Most cases to which suspicion and scandal attach would be eliminated by a one-year rule, strictly applied. This means attendance for one year upon an institution of any and every kind, with reasonable success in its curriculum, before a student

becomes eligible for an intercollegiate team; and this without exception. Concerning its application to the interscholastic team I cannot speak so definitely. Such a rule would emphasize the primacy of scholarship, would simplify the present code, would almost completely stop the growing scandals attaching to the search for material, while it would scarcely change the present practice with reference to uninfluenced students, namely, the habit of waiting a year for development before putting a new man into hard team work.

A change to amateur and graduate coaching is the reform which would probably at once receive a majority vote from the members of our faculties who have given college athletics intelligent and sympathetic attention. It would bring us close to the English practice in Cambridge and Oxford—a practice which we might well imitate. There the professional coach in our sense is unused and repudiated. It would tend to the moderation of our present system—now all too strenuous. In fact, it would quickly give us those reforms which Professor Pattengill had in mind when he proposed and advocated disarmament. An unscrupulous coach with an exorbitant salary is a menace to amateurism. What a temptation the system places before such a man to use part of his personal funds to secure mercenary material and build up a winning team whose victories would enhance his own reputation and increase the ability of an association to pay him a still larger salary, which he can in turn use still more in the same irresponsible way! Can you and I be sure that no western coach does these things? I fear, if the secret history of football were written in all its details, some of us would blush at our own inefficiency in protecting our students and our institutions. I trust that the day of the overpaid and imported coach is numbered. There are fine men among them, but the system is bad to the core and must tend constantly to professionalize our teams.

Twenty-nine years ago the professional coach was more or less in evidence among the thirteen college crews that gathered around Saratoga Lake for that greatest summer regatta. Since then he has gradually come more into evidence, until the game

of football has recently shown him in his highest development and revealed the dangers and mistakes of the system. Several years ago we legislated the foreign professional coach off the teams. I believe we should now legislate him off the campus.

In his best estate the transient professional coach is apt to be a snare; in his worst he is a noisome pestilence. If you wish to teach young men protectionist doctrines, you do not put them under the instruction of a free-trade professor. If you wish your children to learn patriotism, you do not put them under the control of a traitor. If you believe that above all things your son should become a humble Christian disciple, you do not choose an atheist for his most intimate friend. Similarly, if you wish to make athletics a means, not an end; if you wish your students to develop and practice a nice sense of honor; if you wish them to engage in sport for sport's sake, to refrain from gambling and other hurtful vices, should you put them under the direction of an irresponsible person whose interests and associations are the opposite? Under such conditions what can you expect? Can you gather figs from thistles?

If the year's residence rule should soon go into effect, there would be no call for the rule on recruiting. With the reverse true, that rule demands unqualified support.

Isn't the matter of admission charges greatly overdone?

I am not prepared to abrogate the gate fee, but certainly we should think twice before allowing our students to engage in sporting exhibitions where the income of a single fixture runs into the tens of thousands. Let us encourage them to defend the honor and reputation of their institution with the best that is in them. That is manhood. But when our principal concern is to get big receipts from their heroic endeavors, it becomes what the eastern professor quoted above characterizes as the essence of professionalism.

I do not believe we are going to purify the entire student body by acting upon them from without. We must set some leaven at work within.

For one I shall watch with interest the new development said to have been inaugurated at Iowa. Under wise direction that

may become precisely the influence for which we are looking. When that change of student ideals has reached some such high standard as exists today in English universities, we may then turn this whole matter over to the students themselves, to the great advantage of all concerned.

In conclusion may I say I am not, and never have been, hostile to athletics. In college days they were my delight; through all my life they have been a source of health, strength, and rejuvenation. May I also say that I have not in this article aimed one word of criticism at any particular institution, professor, or coach. But I would eradicate from our present system all the diseases which the last five years have brought to the surface. Our colleges have ever been and are now the fountains from which flow the saving influences of our nation. Let us keep that fountain clean from athletic and all other forms of contamination.

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